










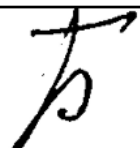

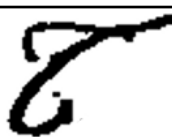


















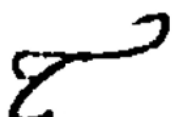

















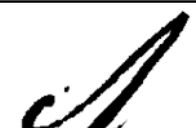





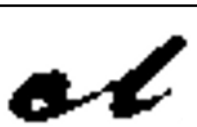

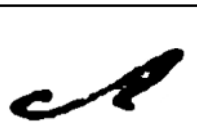


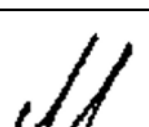

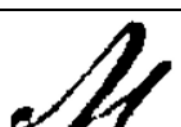

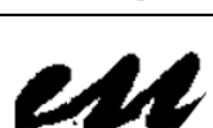
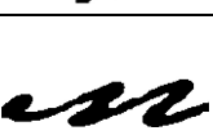
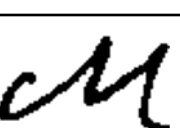
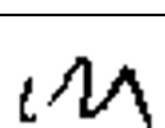
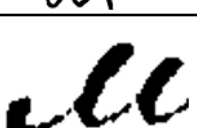
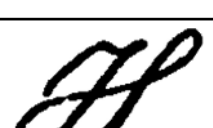

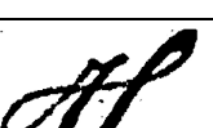

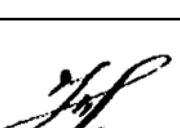
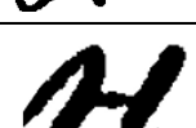
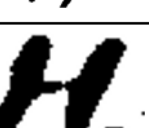
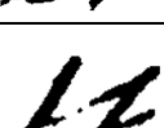
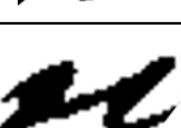
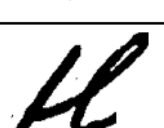
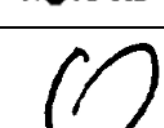
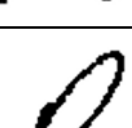
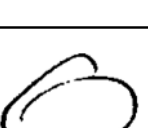
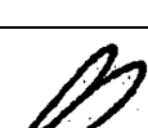
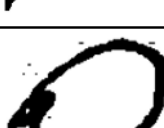

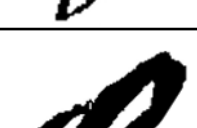
























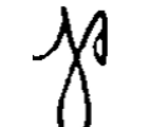







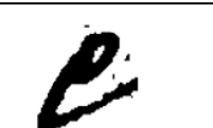


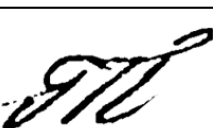
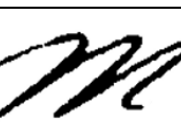

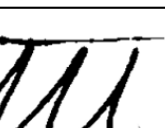
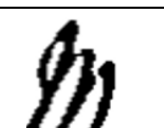

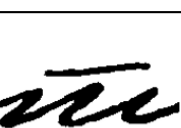
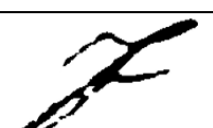
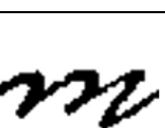


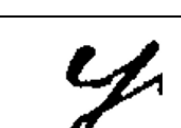
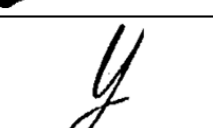
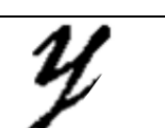

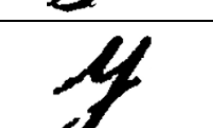
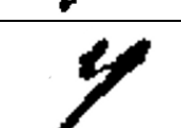
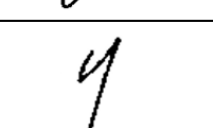
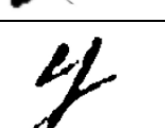
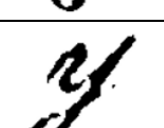
The Russian Alphabet and Deciphering the Handwriting

The Russian Alphabet – Handwritten Examples

А					
а					
Б					
б					
В					
в					
Г					
г					

Д					
д					
Е					
е					
Ж					
ж					
З					
з					
И					
и					
Й					

К					
к					
Л					
л					
М					
м					
Н					
н					
О					
о					

П					
п					
Р					
р					
С					
с					
Т					
т					
у					
у					

Ф					
ф					
Х					
х					
Ц					
ц					
Ч					
Ч					
Ш					
Ш		Very few words begin with the uppercase letter “Ш”			
Ш					

ѣ					
ы					
ѡ					
ѣ					
ю					
ю					
ѣ					
ѣ					

Pre-1918 Alphabet Reform Letters

A major alphabet reform took place in 1918. In an effort to expand literacy and simplify language, reformists removed several letters from the alphabet. When reading pre-1918 documents, you may find the letters listed below which are not currently found in modern Russian.

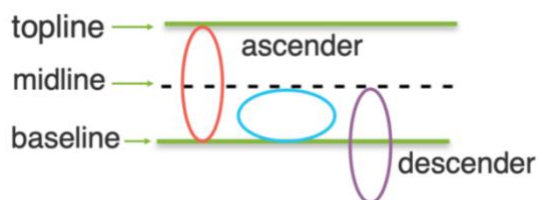
ѣ					
l					
i					
v		This letter, although seen occasionally, is not very common.			
θ					

Other changes made by the 1918 alphabet reform are summarized below:

- з → c
- i → и
- θ → φ
- ѣ → e
- ъ → Ø (ending no longer used at the conclusion of most masculine words)

Tips and Tricks for Deciphering the Handwriting

1. Look for Ascenders and Descenders



Lowercase letters can be categorized into three groups: ascenders, descenders, and centers. Ascenders are letters that extend above the midline, while descenders reach below the baseline. Center letters are contained between the mid and baseline.

Identify both the ascenders and descenders in a document to narrow down the possibilities and help you identify the letter. To the right, you'll find the three ascenders and six descenders in the Russian alphabet. Note that the letter **Д** can be an ascender or a descender depending upon the handwriting style used. The example below illustrates how one might identify ascenders and descenders in a word.

Ascenders

Б 

В 

Д 


Descenders

Д  **Т** 

З  **У** 

Р  **Ф** 

Первое









2. Look for Hooks and Tails

Some handwritten letters begin with “hooks” or end with “tails” as pictured to the right. Learning to recognize these hooks/tails can help you identify letters.

A hook followed by one “mountain,” or stroke, is an **Л**; while a hook followed by two “mountains” is an **М**. A hook with a loop is a **Я**.

Hooks

 **Л**

 **М**

 **Я**

Tails

 **Щ**

 **Ц**

3. Look for Lines Above and Below Letters

Sometimes a record keeper placed a line above or below a letter to help differentiate it from similar looking letters. **Т** and **П** have a line above while **Ш** has a line below. Keep in mind that not all writers made these lines.

Above

 **Т**  **Т**

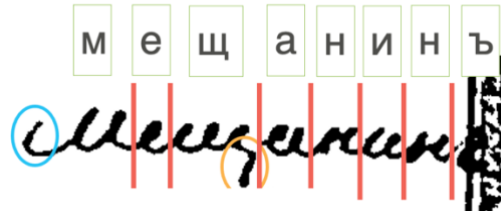
 **П**

Below

 **Ш**

4. Additional Ideas:

- a. **Separate the Letters Out** – identify ascenders, descenders, hooks, and tails, and then use lines to separate the letters as shown in the example to the right.



- b. **Trace the Letters or Write it out Yourself**
- c. **Look at the Whole Page** – letters or words may have been repeated and might be more clearly written somewhere else.
- d. **Analyze the Record Keeper's Handwriting** – look for patterns or styles.
- e. **Use Context** – context can help with words that may be unclear.

Translation: A Three Step Process:

1. **Transcribe the word** – Use the tips and tricks you learned above!
2. **Type the word in Cyrillic letters** – Use russian.typeit.org/ to type in Cyrillic.
3. **Use the Genealogical Word List** – this list contains common genealogical words. It can be found at: familysearch.org/wiki/en/Russian_Genealogical_Word_List. Keep in mind that although useful, some online translators such as Google Translate may not be able to sufficiently translate older terms used in genealogical documents.